




Date: September 17, 2003

To: California Libraries
CLSA Coordinators
California State Advisory Council on Libraries

From: Dr. Kevin Starr
State Librarian of California 

Subj: 2004/05 LSTA Grant Program

The State Library has begun planning for the 2004/05 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant cycle. Although in past years we would have issued a proposal/application packet for open competitive grants by now, my staff and I are approaching the 2004/05 grant cycle from a different perspective.

Many of you are aware that the State Library has endured drastic reductions during the past year and expects additional reductions in the near future. As a state library administrative agency, the California State Library has an obligation to the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services to closely monitor the expenditure of the LSTA state program grant to California. I do not believe the current staffing levels at the State Library can adequately support the level of support and monitoring required to operate the traditional open competitive LSTA grant program that has been in place in California.

At the same time, I am aware that many libraries throughout the state have also suffered reductions and may not have the resources to effectively compete in an open grant program that is minimally structured and invites applications for any type of activity or service that fits within the Statewide Plan for Use of LSTA Funds.

Therefore, I am looking at 2004/05 as a transition year: one that will lead to more effective and economical use of local library resources to participate in grant programs, and will also allow State Library staff to provide sufficient program development, consultation, and detailed oversight of the LSTA program.

I am suspending the open competitive grant program for the 2004/05 cycle. Soon staff will be issuing detailed information about 2004/05 LSTA grant procedures, but, in the meantime, I am providing you with an overview of what we tentatively plan to include in the 2004/05 grant cycle:

- We plan on continuing to provide at least partial support for several popular statewide programs. A few examples are:
 - Infopeople
 - Librarians' Index to the Internet
 - Literacy Initiatives Program
 - Rural Library Initiative
 - Public Library Staff Education Program
 - California Preservation Program
 - California Center for the Book
- We plan on funding other special projects that either are being carried over from the 2003/04 grant cycle or are new, exciting projects that I believe deserve LSTA support.
- We also plan to offer several additional targeted programs that are conceptual at this point in time. We will be developing and refining these programs over the next few months and then will issue application announcements. We plan on offering a streamlined application process for each of these programs. In addition, we plan to survey the California library community to determine what other types of targeted programs local libraries see as appropriate to be developed as LSTA grant programs.

Our current targeted program concepts include:

- Mini-grants to public libraries for the acquisition of non-English materials, tied to community needs. Currently, we are considering targeting children and young adults. We hope to offer libraries the option of having a vendor assist them in selection, acquisition, and processing or acquiring and processing these materials in-house.
- An online distance education course for school librarians and possibly teachers, possibly related to the use of school and public libraries and designed in short segments in order to offer maximum scheduling flexibility.
- Training for public library staff in designing and developing programs and services for seniors.
- Mini-grants to libraries to develop and/or upgrade services aimed specifically at small businesses in their communities.

Although we will be surveying the library community to get input for additional targeted programs, as mentioned above, we welcome suggestions you wish to submit directly for consideration for future projects. Please email them to Tom Andersen, Assistant Chief, Library Development Services, at tandersen@library.ca.gov.